

THE CASE FOR COMPUTER MATCH



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## COMPUTER MATCH! SERVICE

During August 1971, BICC sent out over 5,000 brochures requesting job listings of open or potential job slots from employers throughout Essex, Union and Hudson Counties. This was an out-and-out request for jobs, competing seemingly with established fee paid licensed employment agencies and the NJSES. The move was really in line with the 12 month employment project with Adaptive Systems who, through BICC, want to interview 1,200 persons for placement in employment or training. The key to any placement are positions either current or within the future. Jobs in the reasonably near future may be trained for or prepared for if they are of general significance. Adaptive Systems is cooperating with BICC in processing 1,200 persons through the Computer Match effective July 15th. thru April 15th. 1972. ADP will pay BICC \$35,000 plus absorb all computer operational costs. Monies from ADP will support 2 1/2 staff persons for 9 months in the job referral training referral mandated area.

For the next nine months BICC can utilize the computer match service to assist in selection of:

1. Mutual Benefit Class
2. Bell Telephone Class
3. Prudential Basic Clerical Class
4. Board of Education-Rutgers Class
5. Analysis of Welfare Clients for Job Referral
6. Referrals to Fords Northeast Mechanics Program
7. Analysis of 3M Company's entry level incumbents
8. The Pilot Project with Overbrook Hospital and its mental patients
9. The N.J. College of Medicine & Dentistry's Career Ladder & Health Program
10. President Nixon's Public Employment Program out of City Hall Newark
11. N.J. Labor Department Clerical Training Program
12. Walk-ins to BICC seeking work or training

Historically, movements, change, revolution or redirections occur slowly rather than dramatically or instantly. Such is true with Computer Match and BICC. The last year has been spent in building and defending a worth-credibility change posture in the business community related to a newer approach to hiring. There is still much to be done. The biggest job is to sell the concept of computer match being the result of a company's supervisory personnel describing the kind of person and activities needed to be performed to be a successful employee in a particular job. The candidate tells what activity experiences and his preferences are. If they agree within defined limits, the match is a marriage.

Without the Computer Match process, it is clear that self image and a facade of game playing exists between them, the job seekers and us, the job counselors, whoever we are. The Computer Match uncovers an applicant verbalizing one set of conscious interests and profiling another set. This gives credence to the unsophisticated having perhaps transient motivation based upon glamour or pay of a particular job. For our clients, our computer match has:

- (1) Assisted in determining training directions or job aptitude areas
- (2) Helped the counselor determine likes, dislikes, interests, experiences, unique qualifications, and emotional cultural capacities
- (3) Provided insights for the applicant about himself particularly areas he may not have previously thought about.

The business community consistently but tactfully expresses its concern over the validity of the matching process. Prepostured negative opinions of a job matching system exist because the concept is recent and a break with tradition. The "entry level" examination or test has become the accepted job matching vehicle with all of its exclusionary aspects and cultural biases. Employers reluctant to explore new concepts or re-evaluate old ones nullify efforts to provide "successful" workers and ignore the basic problems, (1) the inability of persons to read adequately as

poor products of an ailing educational system (2) the culturally exclusive nature of testing on a management level for entry level candidates .

A very tightly controlled referral group of 20 persons was sent to companies in a 10 block radius of BICC. They were not accepted because "test scores were too low." Of this group, 12 were computer matches, 6 were computer assisted, and two were non-computer persons. Hence the conclusion that any system, BICC's NJSES's, TEAM's, UOC's, Rev. Leon Sullivan's or whosoever cannot succeed without the enlightened cooperation of employers. It seems the needs are then clear: a re-evaluation of the entry level examination, an emphasis on reading upgrading, and an enlightenment program for employers.

A specific and startling example of Computer Match time saving and efficiency can be illustrated by N.J. Bell Telephone's alerting BICC for telephone installers. BICC searched through its computer listed people register for potential candidates. Of the 250 on file, the computer was asked for 20. Of the 20 furnished, none were postured positively toward success as a telephone installer. BICC then sought new candidates. This process took a half an hour.

Under traditional methods NJSES or any one else would have looked through pending applications, written or phoned, and had the person come in for re-interview. Once approached with a job prospect at good pay, the candidate may have voiced interest and be referred to N.J. Bell. Either for lack of motivation or failing the entry level test, much wheel spinning would have occurred and much counselling and interview time wasted by the referral agency and N.J. Bell.

The business community generally speaks negatively about NJSES. NJSES is defensive to the man about its historical role of providing money to those accused of

not wanting to work or being on the "public" dole. Reports by the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and the National Urban Coalition that "Employment Service is an inflexible bureaucracy whose traditional capabilities and goals are unsympathetic to, if not in direct conflict with, the needs of the disadvantaged" has not helped the NJSES image. They do, however, perform alleged miracles according to their press pagentry with the New Job Bank. In reality, compared to sophisticated programmed third and fourth generation computers and the era of minicomputers, the NJSES job bank is antebellum to say the least. The highly touted Job Bank is nothing more than a microfilm listing of jobs organized by alleged sophistication levels (the Dot Code) and updated each day in a central location. Rather than have cards of data on job requests, there is now a film and scanner. Rather than have an employer phone tens of NJSES offices, he now phones a central distribution number. Control is accomplished by having the referring counselor phone central to see if the position was filled or applicants are still being referred.

There has been no change in intake or analysis procedures. Most likely the last held position determines the Dot Code assignment for the potential employee whose Dot Code is then looked ~~for~~ on the Job Bank. If his Dot Code is not listed, he will be advised that there is no job opening in his "category."

The counseling process re-sifts those persons who initially have difficulty finding and holding employment due to (1) poor motivation, (2) undesirable working conditions, (3) low pay, (4) travel, (5) pay being less than welfare, (6) dissemination, (7) dead-end employment, (8) union bood doggling, (9) seasonal nature of jobs, (10) lack of skill. These factors, in combination or severally, tend to entrap the bulk of unsophisticated persons onto the merry-go-round of NJSES' 1. referral 2. hire (maybe) 3. stay on the job shortly 4. return to NJSES 5. referral 6. hire (maybe) 7. ad infinitum. The NJSES Job Bank does nothing to identify strenghts, weaknesses,

preferences, experiences perhaps unrelated to the Dot Code or improving the selection process. The bank is an in-house job listing improvement which puts NJSES begrudgingly into the twentieth century operationally. It is less than honest in improving the quality of selection and referral.

BICC does not see NJSES and itself as antagonists, but partners working from different directions toward the same goals. Having national stature and tax support, NJSES has acquired and maintained decreed acceptability as an American institution. Change and sensitivity may come about eventually. BICC's concern is non-traditional methods applied to the non-traditional problems of high unemployment among the disadvantaged in Newark, improved reading and language skill abilities, adequate training for existing jobs, and re-evaluation of the employee selection processes by employers. It is within these contexts that the Computer Match is an integral part of the BICC operation.